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ABSTRACT

Community schools in Canada in the 1970s have been modeled to some degree on similar developments in the United States, but they have also evolved as a result of regional and social demands within Canada. Community schools in Canada use all the community resources possible to provide community-oriented programs, including the K-12 program, basic education, and high school completion programs. They involve all citizens in democratically deciding on how to extend services for the overall benefit of the community. Community education programs vary according to the needs of individual communities; urban programs are quite different from programs serving rural areas, such as the Northwest Territories. The obstacles that sometimes hinder the development of community schools include lack of financial support, lack of understanding of community education goals, and lack of commitment to community education by other community service organizations. This summary of the state of community education in Canada is based on a national survey of community school programs. (Author/DS)

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Community Schools in Canada

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Peter F. Prout has done a considerable amount of research on community schools. In 1976 he wrote a report on *Emerging Community Education Developments in Canada* for the Inter-Departmental Community School Committee of the Government of Alberta. The following year he received his Ph.D. from the University of Alberta; the subject of his dissertation was "General and Specific Environmental Conditions in Relation to Community Education Developments in Canada's Provinces and Territories."

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PREFACE

The fact that both educators and citizens have shown an increasing interest in the community school indicates a need to study the idea more closely and to establish a sound empirical base from which community schools in Canada can be promoted, if desired.

The information contained in this booklet is based on a national survey undertaken for a doctoral dissertation at the University of Alberta. Data were obtained through a questionnaire and interviews. Respondents for the study included deputy ministers of education in each province and officials in the territories, as well as others considered "most knowledgeable" about their government's involvement in facilitating the development of community schools in each province and territory. Fifty-seven respondents returned questionnaires and a total of eighty people were interviewed.

The report is an attempt to a) identify common characteristics of community schools in Canada, b) identify reasons for regional differences in the nature of community schools, and c) suggest possible courses of action when developing community schools.

INTRODUCTION

Describing a "typical" community school in Canada is not an easy task. The country's geographic, demographic and economic diversity is strongly reflected in its community schools. In addition, the influence of community school development in the United States is evident in many areas. Any attempt at ignoring this fact reminds one of the story of the Australian aboriginal who received a new boomerang for Christmas and spent the rest of the year trying to throw his old one away.

It is a fact that many of our community schools have been modeled upon American examples and our response to this should not be to "stick our heads in the sand (or snow), and ignore it." Rather, we should carefully examine the American model *within its own context* and then decide upon those traits we consider transferable to particular regions of Canada.

The American influence appears to take three broad forms. The most subtle (some would dispute that it is subtle) is undoubtedly the wide use of American textbooks and journals in our university and college courses. Student teachers, for example, read about glamorous community schools in American literature that is usually exhortative in nature. We cannot deny that there is emotional support for the community school ideal in the United States, but will the beginning teacher find the same support in initiating community school programs in Canada?

Are the social problems of the United States, which are often expressed through their schools, also evident in Canada? It seems that many community schools in the U.S. are established in response to societal needs that are not present in most of Canada.

A second factor which has had a bearing on community school developments in a number of regions in Canada is the influence of the Flint (Michigan) Laboratory. The Flint School Board in conjunction with the National Community Education Association conducts a series of workshops and internships for educators who wish to initiate or improve upon community school activities. Many Canadian educators, including teachers, principals, superintendents and school trustees, have participated in the Flint program and have spent some time visiting Flint community schools.

The third factor influencing Canadian community school developments is the practice of inviting prominent American community educators as keynote speakers at Canadian community school conferences. These speakers are usually eminent educators who eulogize community schools in the United States.

Other factors, such as legislative and financial support of community schools by State Departments of Education, and the massive financial grants of numerous foundations to school districts operating community schools, emphasize the importance of carefully considering all aspects of community schools in the U.S. before we attempt to duplicate American examples in a vastly different Canadian setting.

I would hasten to add that we should not ignore the wealth of experience we can gain from studying American community school activities. However, after reading American literature, visiting American community schools and listening to American community educators, the important questions we should ask ourselves are: What should be the purpose of community schools in Canada and how much of the information we gain from studying American community schools can we apply to our situation in Canada? How should our community schools differ from American community schools?

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY SCHOOL?

In answering this question it is appropriate that we examine historical and current features of community schools in Canada and the United States.

A BRIEF AMERICAN HISTORY

The community school concept in the United States borrowed ideas from the Settlement House and Playground Movements, both of which grew in popularity at the turn of the twentieth century. The term "community school" began to appear in the 1930s and was applied to schools that had two distinct emphases - service to all groups in the community, and the discovery, development and use of a community's resources as part of the educational facilities of the school. The community school was seen as the product of a shift from the progressive school idea of John Dewey, where a child-centred curriculum was stressed, to a life-centred program.

THE FLINT STORY

In Flint, Michigan, a community school program began in 1935 when a wealthy industrialist, Charles Stewart Mott, contributed $6,000 from the Mott Foundation to Flint public schools. This money was used to encourage the public to make greater use of school and community facilities.

Flint schools today continue to receive substantial grants from the Mott Foundation. These grants enable the Flint School Board to add community facilities to their schools and to offer wide-ranging educational, recreational and social services to citizens of Flint. Consequently Flint community schools have become popular "models" to visit.

Two administrative innovations in the program distinguished Flint community schools from the early years. The first was the position of community school director (or

co-ordinator or leader) - established to co-ordinate the regular and extended programs of the school. The other was the introduction of a community school advisory council. A typical council is composed of representatives from the regular teaching staff of the school, representatives from each group or club which uses the school, neighbourhood business men and women, clergy, students and neighbourhood residents. The council's purpose is to act on behalf of the neighbourhood. After listening to the problems and needs of local residents, the council recommends suitable community action.

Both of these innovations are generally accepted (philosophically) in Canada because they enable close school-community working relationships and they help the community school truly serve its community. The extent to which the philosophy is practised varies markedly across the country.

MEANWHILE, IN CANADA...

A few proponents and many critics of the community school in Canada believe it is the rebirth of the "Lighted Schoolhouse" idea that was popular, particularly in the prairie provinces, during the 1930s. The Lighted Schoolhouse was often a one-room rural school which served as a popular community meeting place. However, it falls short of the community school ideal of the 1970s in three ways.

First, the Lighted Schoolhouse was used as a community meeting place in the evenings and this function had little or no effect on the day program for children. Secondly, people who were reached through evening programs were usually those who constantly took advantage of other resources in their neighbourhood and probably had the least need of extra activities. Finally, the Lighted Schoolhouse failed to stimulate community action.

Community school proponents today believe that the community school is a vehicle through which citizens can launch community-initiated projects and that it can be used to provide a wide range of social services, with evening programs constituting only a fraction of the total community school operation.

Ironically, the social action role of the community school has been precipitated partly by the consolidation of smaller school districts. Through consolidation the Lighted Schoolhouse and the "sense of community" it represented was lost; many people believe we are now witnessing a move in Canada to rekindle that community spirit and cohesiveness through community school programs. This aim to get people together seems to be the one common thread binding community schools from coast to coast.

For the most part, the descriptions we have of community schools in Canada are provided by groups and individuals who are responsible for initiating community school programs. An overview of Canadian literature reveals that community schools begin by offering "activity" courses for adults and senior citizens in the community. Typically these courses are avocational and recreational and they are conducted by volunteers from within the community. Participants in these programs usually pay a registration fee to cover administrative costs. In many cases school boards assist these programs by meeting additional maintenance costs. When this is not the case, people have to pay a higher registration fee.

High school completion programs for adults receive high priority in community school programming, and enrichment courses for school-age children and youth (music, drama, recreation) also receive special attention.

Once adult programs are established, the community-school leader forms a school-community advisory council. This council monitors the need for further programs. The community-school leader assumes the role of information officer for the advisory council although he or she sometimes acts as spokesman for the council in discussions with teachers, principals, school boards and other community groups and agencies.

The community-school leader in Canada is normally a certified teacher or a recreation specialist who may have some teaching duties in the classroom. It seems generally preferred, however, that the community-school leader be free of these duties. There are different arrangements across Canada for providing the leader's salary. Usually, however, the school boards or the recreation boards pay the salary,

or these two agencies share the cost.

There is much variation in the use of instructors for community school programs. Some activities have to be led by trained personnel whereas others can be conducted by community volunteers. It seems to depend upon the discretion of the community-school leader and the attitude of the school board whether instructors for non-specialist courses receive any salary. Recreation-oriented programs are often led by specialists, such as art teachers, or by trained personnel in city gymnasia and recreation centres.

Facilities for community school programs can range from school buildings to city parks and neighbourhood centres. In recent years there have been a few schools built with community use in mind, but they are the exception rather than the rule. Costs and planning of these community-oriented schools are often shared by school boards and other community agencies.

A rationale for the development of community schools in Canada has been suggested by Jack Stevens.(1)

Stevens, who has been a leading community school proponent in British Columbia, says that, as expensive public facilities, schools should not be left idle for almost 50% of the time. He also believes that community schools have the potential to utilize many human and physical resources of the community and, in so doing, serve as catalysts in community development. Stevens envisions a community school that is used by the general public in the evenings and on weekends, that takes advantage of all available resources in the day-to-day operation of its K-12 program, and that offers a variety of recreational and avocational programs to adults.

As a classroom teacher, and later as a school-community

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(1) Jack Stevens, "Community Schools," *Education Canada*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Dec. 1974).

co-ordinator, Stevens was instrumental in establishing numerous community school programs in British Columbia.

It is not just educators, however, who have campaigned for the development of community schools in Canada. Recreation authorities in many communities across the country, for example, spearheaded the community movement to lobby school boards for community use of schools. Local recreation boards have co-ordinated community recreation activities in Canada for many years, and access to facilities such as school buildings increases the potential and number of optional programs that can be offered to local communities. Provincial and territorial recreation departments and local recreation boards have indeed been instrumental in the development of community schools in many areas of Canada, and community recreation specialists should continue to take an active role in the future of community schools.

The Coady Institute of St. Francis Xavier University at Antigonish, Nova Scotia, has also contributed to the development of community schools in Canada. Its influence is generally confined to the Atlantic provinces. One example of this influence is the Rural Development Council's community schools in Prince Edward Island. These community schools were started by a group of Islanders who were impressed by the "people power" teaching of the Community Development Program at the Coady Institute. The Rural Development Council's original aim was to provide public forums or meeting places through the community schools. As this idea grew in popularity and the demand for programs increased, the community schools' activities were broadened significantly.

Similarly, initial moves to launch community schools in Newfoundland and parts of Nova Scotia were stimulated by the community development teachings of the Coady Institute.

To recapitulate, community schools, as we know them in Canada in the 1970s, have been modeled to some degree upon similar developments in the United States, but they have also evolved as a result of regional and social demands within Canada.

A final important factor in the history of community schools in Canada has been the number of commissions and reports that have made recommendations regarding their establishment across the country.

REPORTS ON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS IN CANADA

1971: Bill 27 in Quebec established school committees and parents' committees. Specifically, this 1971 Act contained guidelines for the activities of school committees and parents' committees, and it outlined the regulations provided by the Education Act concerning the composition, operation and financing of these committees. The committees were established in an attempt to rekindle the spirit of community involvement in Quebec's schools.

1972: The Worth Report (2) from Alberta outlined the functions of a community school and suggested that serious consideration be given to the development of community schools.

1973: In an Alberta publication entitled *Share It*, (3) a case for the joint use of school and community facilities was presented. A ministerial committee in New Brunswick called for greater co-operation and co-ordination in developing community facilities and an increased use of school facilities by the public. (4)

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(2) Alberta. Commission on Educational Planning. *A Choice of Futures*. (Worth Report.) Edmonton: Queen's Printer, 1972.

(3) *Share It; Some Approaches to the Joint Use of Community Facilities*. Edmonton: Alberta Departments of Education and Culture, Youth and Recreation, 1973.

(4) "A Ministerial Committee Report on the Public Use of School Facilities in New Brunswick." Unpublished report. Fredericton: Government of New Brunswick, 1973.

1974: The Graham Report (5) from Nova Scotia recommended that the school rather than the school system should become the basic educational unit and that citizens, through school councils, should have a greater voice in school affairs. In British Columbia the Broom Report (6) noted the need for legislation and school board policies regarding community use of schools, and it suggested that the total costs of school plant operation should be classified as extraordinary expenditure and made eligible for provincial grants.

An extremely important boost was given to the community school movement by Ontario's Minister of Education, Thomas L. Wells, at a conference in London, Ontario. (7) In a speech the Minister confirmed his government's support of community schools and he outlined specific steps the government would take to assure their continued development.

1975: *What happens next is up to you* (8) was the last of a series of reports concerning the status of community schools in Ontario. The implications of this report were important not only to Ontario, but also to other parts of Canada.

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(5) Nova Scotia. Royal Commission on Education, Public Services and Provincial-Municipal Relations. Report, Vol. III: *Education*. (Graham Report.) Halifax: Queen's Printer, 1974.

(6) *Leisure Services in British Columbia*. (Broom Report.) Victoria: Queen's Printer, 1974.

(7) Thomas L. Wells, "Remarks to the Ontario Communities and Schools Conference", London, Oct. 1974.

(8) Ontario. Legislative Assembly. Select Committee on the Utilization of Educational Facilities. *What happens next is up to you. Final Report*. 1975.

1976: A report entitled *Synthesis and Suggestions* (9) contained recommendations related to the role of Alberta's provincial government in facilitating the development of community schools in that province. This report is the summary of five major research projects that were conducted on behalf of the Alberta government's Inter-Departmental Community School Committee. The major findings of those reports are as follows:

Roberta Driscoll (10) found that community schools in Alberta were perceived primarily as school facilities that are open to the community for community-based programming of all kinds. Formal agreements related to the joint use of school and community facilities were investigated by Rex Beach. (11) He discovered a wide variety of such agreements that appeared to operate effectively in particular instances. An extensive analysis of government policy related to community schools was carried out by A.R. Murray. (12) Keith Sullivan (13) found that a "large

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(9) W. Glyn Roberts, *Synthesis and Suggestions; Project Summary Report*. Edmonton: Community Education Project. Inter-Departmental Community School Committee, Government of Alberta, 1976.

(10) Roberta H. Driscoll, *Informed Thought in Alberta Concerning Community Education*. Edmonton: Community Education Project. Inter-Departmental Community School Committee, Government of Alberta, 1976.

(11) Rex Beach, *Alberta Joint Use Agreements; An Analysis*. Edmonton: Community Education Project. Inter-Departmental Community School Committee, Government of Alberta, 1976.

(12) A.R. Murray, *Alberta Government Policy Related to Community Education*. Edmonton: Community Education Project. Inter-Departmental Community School Committee, Government of Alberta, 1976.

(13) Keith Charles Sullivan, *Alberta Community Schools; An Analysis*. Edmonton: Community Education Project. Inter-Departmental Community School Committee, Government of Alberta, 1976.

number of Alberta's schools were considered community schools by superintendents", and he reported findings on numerous parameters related to differences between community and "non-community" schools. On a national basis Peter Prout(14) discovered considerable differences in the definitions and nature of community schools. He also reported that provincial and territorial governments adopted varying policies regarding their support in principle of community schools. Included in these policies were guidelines for funding and organizational structure best suited to the development of community schools.

IN SEARCH OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL MODEL

The most widely accepted (in the U.S.) description of *community education* is given by Jack Minzey. (15) Briefly, Minzey claims that the K-12 program is only a *part* of the total community education and that the whole community should be involved in planning a K-12 program relevant to their area.

The other three elements that constitute the "program" components of Minzey's definition of community education are: the efficient use of all community facilities for instructional and recreational purposes; the provision of additional programs for school-age children and youth; and the provision of similar programs for adults.

The two "process" components are the delivery and co-ordination of community services, and community involvement. The latter is normally characterized by

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(14) Peter F. Prout, *Emerging Community Education Developments in Canada.* Edmonton: Community Education Project. Inter-Departmental Community School Committee, Government of Alberta, 1976.

(15) Jack Minzey, "Community Education - Another Perception", *Community Education Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (May-June 1974).

the appointment of a school-community co-ordinator and the formation of a school-community advisory council.

In proposing these components Minzey notes that schools are common public agencies found in every neighbourhood and, as such, they have become the main vehicle in the United States through which community education has been delivered.

Minzey's acclaimed treatise on community education was used by Sullivan (16) in his attempt to develop a mathematical scale for statistically measuring the essential elements of a community school. Sullivan's study was conducted in Alberta and it marks the first attempt at empirically testing a number of components that have been accepted without extensive research into their suitability or relevance in Canada.

The implementation of Minzey's idea has not been easy in the United States and this further emphasizes the importance of clearly understanding the community education-community school arrangement in the U.S. before we attempt any large-scale duplication of American community schools in Canada. Do we accept Minzey's definition of community education and the expanded role of his community school? What role should a community school play in Canada and how do we measure its effectiveness?

IN RETROSPECT

The community school in Canada has been mentioned favourably in important commissions and ministerial reports; there have been a number of research projects conducted that dealt with community school developments; and there are numerous articles to be found in periodicals that describe community schools in various parts of the country. In all of these writings, however, important issues have been raised in relation to community schools.

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(16) Keith Charles Sullivan, "Community Schools: An Analysis of Organizational and Environmental Characteristics". Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1976.

Who should be involved in planning new community schools? Who should share the cost? Who pays the community-school leader and what qualifications should he or she have? Who meets the additional administrative and maintenance costs associated with community schools?

These are only a few of the relevant questions.

A FOCUS ON CANADA

Deputy ministers of education and other key government personnel see community schools as: community development agencies, public forums, schools utilizing existing community resources, schools that are responsive to community needs, or even schools that simply exist physically in the community.

These people also believe that (a) joint use of school and community facilities, (b) community involvement in planning and conducting the K-12 school program, (c) providing activities for adults, and (d) community involvement in school decision-making and identifying community problems are more important aspects of community schools than additional programs for children and youth and using the community school as a delivery point for various community services.

More specifically, they identified the following activities as those most important for community schools in Canada:

1. The involvement of citizens in school affairs. This includes the use of community members as instructional resources, the input of citizens into curriculum development, and a shared community-school responsibility for the general behaviour of youth.

2. The utilization of school *and* community facilities in the instructional process of the K-12 program and in providing community school programs.

3. Providing services to people in more ways than regular schooling. This implies the use of schools, after normal school hours, as community facilities for recreational and avocational programs.

4. The structuring of programs that are relevant to the entire community. These programs generally refer to activities *outside* the K-12 school program, although a number of respondents believed that a community school's academic K-12 program can reflect in part the specific needs of a community. This is particularly true of communities in the North and in some ethnic communities in the larger cities of Canada.

5. Providing basic education and high school completion programs for adults.

6. Practising and promoting democracy in a community was also noted as an important characteristic of a community school. This point is related to the first one made, in that citizens are encouraged to participate in school affairs.

According to these officials, achieving the above goals largely depends upon the understanding and support of the community school by school administrators (including superintendents), school board officials, teachers, a significant segment of the community, department or ministry of education officials, and personnel from other government departments or ministries.

Once we have identified a number of specific characteristics of community schools in Canada as well as the people who will be affected by them, we can turn to a number of factors that must be considered during the implementation of the community school activities. Failure to do this, and a lack of understanding of basic organizational characteristics, often leads to frustration for community school proponents and the goals of a community school will not be achieved.

ORGANIZATION THEORY AND COMMON SENSE

One of the greatest problems encountered by communities in their attempts to develop community school programs is their lack of understanding of the way institutions work. A community school is part of a greater educational enterprise and it cannot develop programs without affecting the larger organization in some way. The departments or ministries of education in Newfoundland,

Nova Scotia, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and the Northwest Territories recognized this fact and made organizational adjustments to accommodate changes that community schools precipitate.

Similarly, community-school leaders and their advisory councils must recognize that lasting and important changes in our educational systems should be well planned and carefully executed. Many people do not understand the mechanics of a large organization like a department or ministry of education or even a large school board, and when they want some change implemented they "want it *now*!" Community school proponents need to understand how school boards and departments or ministries of education operate, and they must respect the domain of other social service organizations. They need to take care not to become "empire builders."

On the other hand, government agencies have contributed to some of the problems which community schools encounter. Government departments have sometimes been accused of seemingly "competing for clientele" by offering large sums of money in the form of grants to communities. A number of institutions and agencies have also resented community schools' encroaching upon their domains and others have been somewhat wary of the community becoming involved in their professions.

These are not the only pitfalls for fledgling community school supporters.

The additional funding associated with community schools is a major barrier to their continued growth. School boards and departments or ministries of education are not prepared to meet all the costs involved in community school development, particularly when the community school is used by many different community groups. In any case, community schools should not depend upon outside sources for their funds. This is antithetical to the community involvement ideal and it makes future planning difficult.

Where do the extra funds for maintenance and administrative matters come from?

This problem can be tackled primarily through joint use agreements whereby school boards and other agencies, such as recreation boards and city governments, arrange to use all neighbourhood facilities on a cost-sharing basis. There are numerous ways of structuring these joint use agreements.

Examples in Canada include agreements between school boards and city governments. For example, the city builds, say, a swimming pool, on school grounds. The school then uses the pool during school hours and the city recreation department uses it after school hours. In these instances the city usually takes responsibility for maintenance costs in return for the land. In other instances the parties to a joint use agreement will charge each other a nominal "user fee" to cover additional costs.

The objective of all these agreements is to make maximum use of all community facilities at the least possible additional cost to any one organization. Volunteer help in community schools obviously keeps costs down and is in keeping with the "sense of community", one of the goals of a community school.

Community school proponents must also realize that their efforts to establish programs will be enhanced if school boards consider community schools as a priority. Department or ministry of education guidelines in almost all regions of Canada permit school boards to open their schools for community use. However, this does not automatically mean that school boards and, in many cases, school principals will sanction and support community schools.

This is where the hard work and careful planning of community representatives and other individuals or groups is important. Quite often school boards have to be convinced of the worth of community schools, and those campaigning for them must spend long hours collecting facts and building a case. Particular attention should be paid to presenting a case which does not involve additional funding. Many school superintendents and school board administrators are already struggling with budgetary constraints and they cannot possibly support community schools financially. Most school boards, however,

are open to plans that can be accommodated within existing budgetary and organizational guidelines.

A common misconception about community schools is that they are most "successful" in densely populated urban areas. This, in turn, often leads to the belief that they are only useful in serving lower income groups and that upper and middle income groups will not support community school programs. Although it is true that community schools are valuable public forums for lower income groups, many government officials have indicated that community school activities are gaining support from all levels of society.

In fact, a number of school boards have sponsored community schools in areas of declining school enrolments, particularly in middle class areas of young or small families. The empty rooms resulting from decreasing enrolments are made available for community use, particularly for pre-school activities.

Community schools in many rural areas suffer from a lack of community support because of their geographical location; they are too distant from their clientele.

In the Northwest Territories, however, the school is often the only large community centre in a particular area and it is a "perfect" model as a community school. The schools in Hutterite colonies in Western Canada are also excellent models of "community schools". In the small fishing villages of Newfoundland, community schools serve to bring the inhabitants together, whereas in large cities they are often a means of helping people maintain cultural and ethnic identity and of breaking cities into manageable units.

In their attempts to meet the needs of many people, community school advocates should be cautioned that other institutions are also providing community services and community schools should be careful not to duplicate these.

Often, community-school leaders can refer the needs of community groups to other agencies. This calls for co-operation and co-ordination among all community, city government and provincial government agencies that are involved in meeting community needs.

This matter of co-operation and co-ordination among agencies produces an interesting paradox in some regions of Canada. For example, departments or ministries of education expect school boards to co-operate with other local agencies in maintaining community school programs. School board authorities counter that there seems little point in their co-operating with other local authorities when their funds and directives come from the department or ministry of education. This implies that the efforts of provincial governments in promoting community co-operation and co-ordination of services at the local level are wasted unless they demonstrate leadership in this regard.

A final point to be considered during the initial stages of developing a community school is the socio-cultural nature of the community. Canada's cultural mosaic is beautifully reflected in many of its community schools. People's demands and needs vary culturally, and this fact alone implies that it is impossible to develop a structured model of a community school for Canada. This is not to deny that certain principles, thoroughly tested through research and practice, would apply, but it does mean that community-school leaders must be sensitive to the specific needs of their community school's clientele.

In summary, community schools in Canada use all the community resources possible in providing community-oriented programs, including the K-12 program, basic education and high school completion programs for adults; and they involve all citizens in democratically deciding upon extended services for the overall benefit of the community. These activities and the "sense of community" that community schools attempt to foster are the most common characteristics of community schools in Canada.

The obstacles that sometimes prevent the further development of community schools include the lack of financial support and commitment to the goals of a community school, a lack of understanding by community groups of organizational structures and processes, and a misunderstanding of many political, legal, economic, demographic and socio-cultural factors that impinge upon organizations that are affected by community school activities.

The regional characteristics of community schools in Canada are best understood by briefly examining some of the unique structures and functions of community schools in each province and territory.

CROSS-COUNTRY SYNOPSIS

Newfoundland: Community schools were influenced by the Coady Institute's community development teachings. They were initiated to bring small communities together in an outreach style and they rely upon volunteer teachers for many programs.

Prince Edward Island: The Rural Development Council's "public forums" formed the basis for P.E.I.'s community schools. These schools were also influenced by the Coady Institute and their primary aim was to discuss ways of improving Island living.

Nova Scotia: The Division of Continuing Education, Department of Education, sponsors community schools in Nova Scotia. Community schools have been modeled somewhat on the Flint example, although the influence of the Coady Institute is noticeable. The Department of Recreation's Little Red Schoolhouse Program offers potential for meeting the diverse needs of communities, and education and recreation officials are discussing terms of reference.

New Brunswick: School boards are currently working on joint use agreements with city recreation departments.

Quebec: The legislation creating parents' committees and school committees was meant to rekindle a spirit of involvement in Quebec's schools after school district consolidations. Most community school activities are oriented towards recreation.

Ontario: The Ministry of Education sanctions and encourages the development of community schools through the Community Schools Unit of the Curriculum Branch, and the Ministry's nine regional offices of education. School boards operate many community schools that are modified versions of the Flint model. The nature of the schools' programs and activities varies markedly across the province.

Manitoba: Community schools tend to be programmed for the inner city and emphasize social services. Experience in the U.S. has been an important influence in Manitoba. The Rural Educational Alternatives Program is being converted by the government into a community schools network to serve rural areas.

Saskatchewan: The extensive community college services in Saskatchewan have outpaced community school developments to date.

Alberta: The Alberta government's Inter-Departmental Community School Committee has conducted extensive needs surveys and evaluations of existing community schools, and is basing future planning upon the findings of its studies. Local education authorities are attempting to monitor needs in the community and recreation boards are co-operating with school boards in establishing joint use agreements for all community facilities.

British Columbia: This province is generally recognized as the first in Canada to *systematically* develop community schools. Leadership in this effort came from classroom teachers and school principals, and their experiences were invaluable in developing community schools in other parts of the country. Extensive use of community facilities, wide-ranging community services and volunteer support characterize B.C.'s community schools.

Yukon: Federal involvement, land claims disputes and ethnic differences have made it difficult to develop a suitable community school model in this region.

Northwest Territories: Community schools have been adopted by the Department of Education as integral components of the educational system and many of the Territories' schools are perfect models of community schools.

A CANADIAN IDENTITY

Among the major differences affecting Canadian and U.S. community school development is the fact that legislation in Canada generally concerns local authorities and agencies while legislation in many American states was designed to allow state and federal involvement in community

schools. This involvement has been in the form of channeling more state and federal funds into community schools, whereas the Canadian direction has been to maximize the use of existing facilities and resources. It is important to add, however, that American attitudes towards funding community schools are based upon the belief that long-term benefits will accrue. This vision is not widely held in Canada.

Canada's cultural diversity contributes to the unique development of community schools in this country. In Newfoundland, for example, the community school provides a link between isolated fishing communities and brings fishermen together to share ideas. Similarly, the Northwest Territories' community schools weld communities together and provide common meeting areas, as do the community schools in P.E.I.

By contrast, Toronto's community schools help subdivide large urban areas into smaller identifiable units which are usually of ethnic origin.

Community schools in other parts of Canada fit somewhere along this continuum. They range from the linking nature of Newfoundland's community schools to the anti-conglomerate nature of community schools in densely populated areas.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

If community schools are to become an integral part of our educational system, rather than be simply a passing fad, there are some essential steps that must be taken to assure their survival.

I believe it is critical that school boards support the idea and that school trustees are consulted during the planning stages of community schools. As well as school trustees, other community representatives and additional groups should be involved in establishing community schools - classroom teachers and school principals, local recreation authorities, local business men and women, church leaders, officials of city or district governments, and representatives of social services who operate across the proposed community school's jurisdiction.

One of the most contentious issues related to community schools in Canada is the appointment of a community-school leader (or co-ordinator). Should he or she be a certified teacher? Should he or she have part-time classroom teaching duties? Who pays the leader's salary? Why not appoint recreation leaders as community-school leaders? None of these questions seems to be adequately addressed in Canada.

In my opinion community-school leaders should have a thorough understanding of basic organization and administrative concepts, they should have some background in community development, and they must be energetic individuals with a personality suited to working with people from all walks of life. Community-school leaders need a master's degree or its equivalent.

I am convinced that this most important position cannot be adequately filled by anyone who does not posses

the qualifications and background I have outlined. In fact, I suspect that many of our problems in community schools today stem from employing community-school leaders who do not understand basic community development and administrative principles. To throw well-meaning people into this position without adequate training is folly indeed.

The question of salary can be resolved provincially or even regionally, but I believe we should encourage well-qualified people to accept the *full-time* position of community-school leader.

One of the first duties of the leader is to form a community school advisory committee. This committee should be representative of all groups within the community, and its first task, under the direction of the community-school leader, should be to initiate activities that would appeal to a large section of the community.

As people begin to take advantage of these activities a detailed assessment of needs can be conducted, along with a survey of all services and resources that are available in the community. Ultimately the community-school leader should match community needs with available resources and introduce new programs or services only where necessary.

The primary functions of a community school, then, are to direct people to available services and to make maximum use in its instructional program of all resources. We have invaluable human resources in our communities that we could be tapping to improve the quality of instruction in our schools.

Obviously, the development process will be slow and needs to be well planned. The community-school leader must keep school principals and classroom teachers fully informed of projected activities, and he or she must ensure that all groups and agencies affected by community schools are working to co-ordinate their services.

Schools in Canada are being increasingly considered as valuable community resources and the need for government personnel, school trustees, educators and community representatives to discuss the purpose and activities of community schools is paramount. Seminars and workshops for

informing school trustees, educators and the community of the role and structure of community schools will help their future development.

Maintaining a constant dialogue among all concerned with community schools will develop trust and confidence among the groups with vested interests in community service. In much of the literature about community schools people ask questions and make statements like: "Whatever happened to community spirit?" "Why aren't people involved anymore?" "Joe Citizen doesn't care about a 'sense of community' today."

These observations seem to be symptomatic of a deeper problem: namely, that many people feel alienated from the large organizations and institutions that constantly touch their lives. It is not that they have lost interest in their communities; rather, they are bewildered or disgruntled by the seemingly impregnable organizations that dispense so many community services. Community school advisory councils in the United States are advertised as "people helping people." Through the advisory council people can articulate their problems and concerns. Generally it is one of their neighbours, not an impersonal service magically appearing from a "government organization", who responds.

We have lived through the "future shock" of the 1970s and, as predicted, it has left people confused and disoriented. Many low income families, for example, can list numerous representatives of various social service organizations (including school counsellors, classroom teachers and school principals) who come to visit them about one particular problem. As a result of all these visits, people may become more confused than when they first encountered the problem. The community school is seen as one organization through which people can regain a sense of control.

Why not assign to *one* agency the task of monitoring the needs of a community and then matching those needs with the *most suitable* service available? The most common agency in every neighbourhood is a school.

In an age of spiralling capital and maintenance costs

many organizations are centralizing their services while we continue to build neighbourhood schools. Why not build multi-purpose buildings on a cost-sharing basis and decentralize all social services? These neighbourhood centres would be within easy access of most people and many social service organizations could co-ordinate their activities more effectively.

The school within this community centre would have almost unlimited resources for its educational program. Children could gain work experience in the various business and social service organizations in the neighbourhood and the school could draw upon the expertise of community and professional personnel.

Many of these ideas are already in practice in some parts of Canada. To assure the continued growth of community schools, energy and enthusiasm are required, coupled with sound judgement and planning by responsible community leaders.

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